

#1 Facts about mental illness

Mental illness can generate misunderstanding, confusion and sometimes fear. As an employer, you may have preconceived views about employing or working with people with mental illness.

Following are a number of facts about mental illness.

<p>FACT 1: People with mental illness can and DO work</p>	<p>People with mental illness successfully work across the full spectrum of workplaces.</p> <p>Some people disclose their mental illness and some do not. Most importantly, people with mental illness can succeed or fail, just like any other worker.</p> <p>Examples of prominent people with mental illness who openly discuss and reflect on their mental health issues and have developed successful careers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Geoff Gallop - Former WA Labor Premier • Craig Hamilton - ABC Sports Commentator • Olivia Newton John - Entertainer • Pat Cash - Tennis player
<p>FACT 2: Mental illness is treatable</p>	<p>Mental illness can be treated. This means that many people who have mental illness, and are being treated, recover well or even completely. However, because there are many different factors contributing to the development of each illness, it can sometimes be difficult to predict how, when, or to what degree someone is going to get better.¹</p>
<p>FACT 3: The vast majority of people with mental illness are NOT dangerous</p>	<p>It is far more likely that people with mental illness are victims of violence rather than being violent themselves. Only a small number of people with mental illness are violent and this tends to be when they are experiencing an untreated psychotic episode. This behaviour can be managed through the use of medication.</p>
<p>FACT 4: People with mental illness live and work in our communities</p>	<p>People with mental illness do live and work in our communities. The majority of people successfully manage their illness without it greatly impacting on their home and work life, while others may require support to minimise its impact.</p>
<p>FACT 5:</p>	<p>Having mental illness does not necessarily imply any loss of</p>

¹ SANE Australia (2009) [Treatments for Mental Illness – Factsheet 9](#), SANE Australia website.

<p>People with mental illness have the same intellectual capacity as anyone else</p>	<p>intellectual functioning. Some symptoms and medications associated with mental illness may affect a person's ability to concentrate, process, or remember information.</p>
<p>FACT 6: People with schizophrenia do NOT have multiple personalities</p>	<p>People with schizophrenia experience changes in their mental functioning where thoughts and perceptions become distorted and are often 'split' from reality. Schizophrenia is not about having 'split or multiple personalities', as is often portrayed in the media.</p>